



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



CRIME STATISTICS ANALYSIS: QUARTER 4 (2025/26)

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CRIME STATISTICS ANALYSIS:

Quarter 4 (2025/26)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Acting Minister of Police released the fourth-quarter crime statistics for the 2025/26 financial year (1 January to 31 March 2026) on Friday, 22 May 2026. This paper analyses selected categories from these statistics, focusing primarily on year-on-year changes between Q4 2024/25 and Q4 2025/26. Where relevant, the available Q4 series from 2022 to 2026 is used to assess whether recent changes form part of a longer trend.

The analysis is based on recorded crime statistics and therefore reflects crimes reported to, or detected by, SAPS. It should not be read as a complete measure of actual crime prevalence, particularly for under-reported offences. Recorded figures are also influenced by reporting behaviour, enforcement patterns, police capacity, and classification practices. Therefore, in addition to underlying changes in prevalence, changes in recorded crime may reflect shifts in policing intensity or public willingness to report.

Reducing crime is a key priority of the 7th Administration, both to improve public safety and to restore confidence in the criminal justice system. The Q4 2025/26 crime statistics present a cautiously improved but uneven picture. The 17 community-reported serious crimes declined by 4.4% year-on-year, while several high-volume categories, including robbery with aggravating circumstances and property-related crime, continued to fall from their recent peaks. These decreases are significant, particularly because they occurred across several major categories and provinces. However, limiting the analysis to a single quarter makes it difficult to distinguish short-term fluctuation from long-term shifts in the broader crime pattern.

The aggregate decline should not be read as a uniform improvement. Attempted murder declined only marginally, kidnapping remains elevated despite a slight year-on-year decrease, and commercial crime increased. The persistence of attempted murder, firearm-related violence, kidnapping linked to ransom and extortion, and rising commercial crime points to deeper organised and economic drivers of crime. **These organised criminal dynamics are not always fully captured by conventional crime categories, which may record an incident but not necessarily the underlying networks and illicit markets that drive it.**

Before turning to a detailed analysis of selected crime categories, the paper provides a brief summary of key trends and areas of concern emerging from the Q4 2025/26 crime statistics.

2. HIGHLIGHTS

Murder declined by 9.5% in the fourth quarter compared with the same period the previous year. This reduction is encouraging, but it remains unevenly distributed. The Eastern Cape and Western Cape together accounted for 38% of all murders, despite comprising only about 22% of the national population, indicating that the murder burden remains disproportionately concentrated in these two provinces. This concentration is particularly stark in the Western Cape, where 225 of the 242 gang-related murders occurred during the quarter.

The causative-factor data also show that interpersonal conflict remains the primary driver of murder. Arguments, misunderstandings, road rage and provocation accounted for nearly one in five sampled murders. This is a reminder that reducing murder cannot rely on policing alone.

Sexual offences present an overall decline 8.5%, which must be cautiously interpreted. South Africa's rape rate of 15.4 per 100,000 remains among the highest in the world. The multi-year trend shows consistent improvement in Gauteng, but the Eastern Cape and Free State have remained stubbornly high. A familiar residence is the most frequent rape location (67%), showing that this is overwhelmingly a crime committed in what should be a safe space. The rise in sexual assault while rape declined also warrants closer attention.

Aggravated robbery decreased substantially in Q4 2025/26 (15.6%), with the subcategories showing year-on-year decreases. The strongest reductions were recorded in TRIO crimes. Gauteng remains the dominant province for aggravated robbery overall, especially carjacking and truck hijacking, while KwaZulu-Natal remains prominent in residential robbery and TRIO crimes. Cash-in-transit robbery declined only slightly and remains a low-volume but high-impact category.

Property-related crime also continued to decline, falling by 8.7% year-on-year and extending the downward movement observed since the Q4 2022/23 peak. The decrease was broad across the main subcategories, including residential burglary, non-residential burglary, vehicle theft, theft from vehicles and stock theft. The Northern Cape's small increase and the continued concentration of stock theft in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal justify closer monitoring.

Crimes detected as a result of police action increased by 13% year-on-year. This increase was driven mainly by detecting drug-related crime and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The decrease in illegal possession of firearms and ammunition is noteworthy, particularly where firearm recoveries declined in stations that continue to experience high levels of murder, gang violence or aggravated robbery.

Overall, the figures point to cautious improvement, but also to persistent and highly localised pressures that require sustained, targeted and multi-sectoral responses. We now turn to a more detailed analysis of the crime statistics.

3. NATIONAL CRIME STATISTICS OVERVIEW

Nationally, recorded community-reported serious crime decreased by **4.4% year-on-year in the fourth quarter of 2025/26, continuing the downward trend** that began after the 2024 peak. The 17 community reported crimes decreased by 16 647 cases, from 375 007 in Q4 2024/25 to 358 360 in Q4 2025/26. The decrease was consistent across all three months of the quarter, with January, February, and March each recording fewer cases than their corresponding months in Q4 2024/25.

At Provincial level, the decline was broad-based, with all provinces except the North West recording decreases. The largest **absolute decreases** were in Gauteng (-5 066), the Western Cape (-3 799), the Eastern Cape (-2 554), Limpopo (-1 606), and KwaZulu-Natal (-1 534). The **North West was the only province showing an increase**, rising by 109 cases, or 0.5%. This is small in national terms, but it stands out because it runs counter to the national trend.

The largest contributors to the national total crime volume are Gauteng (26%), the Western Cape (19.1%), KwaZulu-Natal (17.2%), and the Eastern Cape (10%). Together these **four provinces account for about 72.3% of recorded community-reported serious crimes** in the quarter. So even where percentage decreases appear moderate, changes in these provinces carry substantial weight in the national picture.

Community-reported serious crimes in quarter 4 show a clear downward trend after peaking in 2024. Across the five-year series, the quarter 4 total is lower than the level recorded at the start of the five-year period, thus falling below the baseline used for comparison. A similar pattern was observed during the preceding quarters. Figure 1 illustrates the overall contraction across the 17 community-reported crimes. The aggregate trend, however, conceals variation between crime categories and provinces. The largest absolute reductions were recorded in property-related crime (-6 987), contact crime (-7 405), which includes robbery with aggravating circumstances (-4 953). Substantial decreases are also noted within aggravated robbery, particularly carjacking (-20.4%), robbery at residential premises (-18.3%), and robbery at non-residential premises (-22.0%). **Murder also decreased by 546 cases, or 9.5%**, continuing the decline from the 2024 peak.

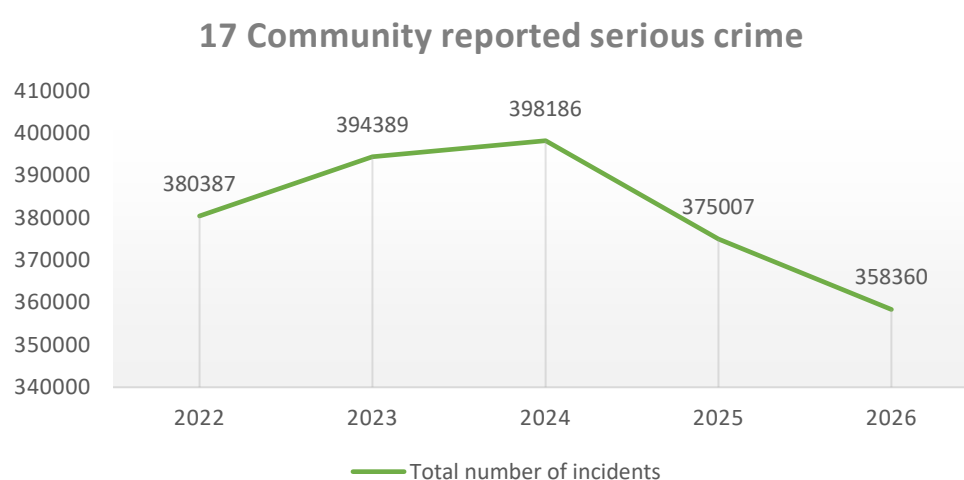


Figure 1: Crime rate of 17 community reported serious crime during the fourth quarter from 2022 to 2026. Source: Adapted from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

However, the overall reduction should not be read as a uniform improvement across all crime types. Some categories remain above earlier levels in the five-year series, while others increased year-on-year. Commercial crime increased by 1 423 cases or 4.0% (**45% across the 5-year period**), and within the sexual offences breakdown, sexual assault and attempted sexual offences increased despite an overall decline in sexual offences. Attempted murder also declined only marginally year-on-year and remains higher than in 2022. The aggregate decrease depicted in Figure 1, therefore, provides an important national overview, but the granular trends are more insightful for understanding changes within the crime categories.

4. SELECTED CATEGORIES OF CONTACT CRIME: A GRANULAR VIEW

This section provides a granular analysis of contact crimes against the person. The fourth-quarter data reflect a broadly declining pattern across the categories; each will be considered separately in the following sections.

4.1. Murder



Nationally, 5 181 murders were recorded in quarter 4 of 2025/26, representing a decrease of 546 (9.5%) from 5 727 murders in the same quarter of 2024/25. This continues a downward trend, though the pattern varies by province and station. The five-year period under observation shows murders increasing from 2022 to a peak in 2024, then declining for two consecutive years, bringing levels far below those observed in 2022 (see Figure 2).

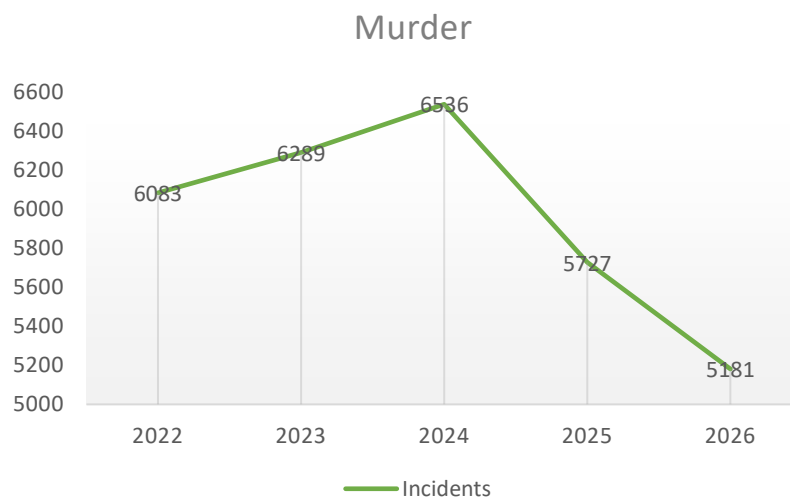


Figure 2: Murders recorded between January and March, from 2022 to 2026.
Source: Adapted from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics.

Murder declined in all provinces except the North West. The decrease is driven by Gauteng (-15%), KwaZulu-Natal (-11.3%), the Western Cape (-8%), and the Eastern Cape (-7%). Notably, only the North West recorded an increase by 18.9% or 43 incidents. However, the total is modest compared with the high-volume provinces, so it does not offset the overall decline.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 show substantial provincial variation in the murder ratio for quarter 4.¹ Nationally, the murder ratio was 8.2 murders per 100 000 people. The **Eastern Cape recorded the highest ratio, at 14.3% per 100 000**, followed by the **Western Cape at 12.8 per 100 000**. Both provinces were well above the national average and fell within the highest category illustrated on the map.

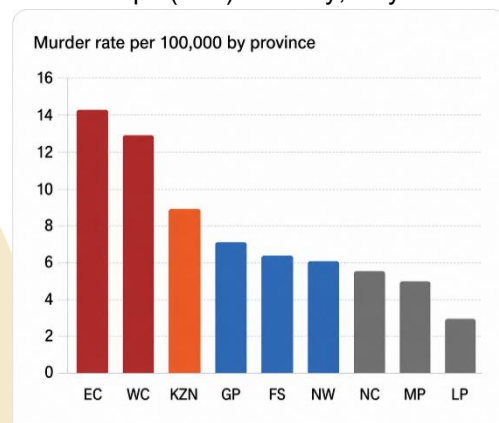


Figure 3: Provincial variation in the murder ratio. Source: SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics.

¹ South African Police Service. 2026. *Crime statistics 2025/2026: fourth quarter (January to March 2026) presentation*.

KwaZulu-Natal also recorded an above-average murder ratio, at 8.8% per 100 000, see Figure 3 and Figure 4. Gauteng recorded 7.1 per 100 000, followed by the Free State (6.4), North West (6.2), Northern Cape (5.6), and Mpumalanga (5.0), all below the national ratio. **Limpopo recorded the lowest murder ratio, at 2.9 per 100 000.**

Murder, when adjusted for population, remains largely concentrated in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape, despite these provinces having substantially smaller population sizes than Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal.

Murder

Per ratio: Provincial distribution (January 2026 to March 2026)

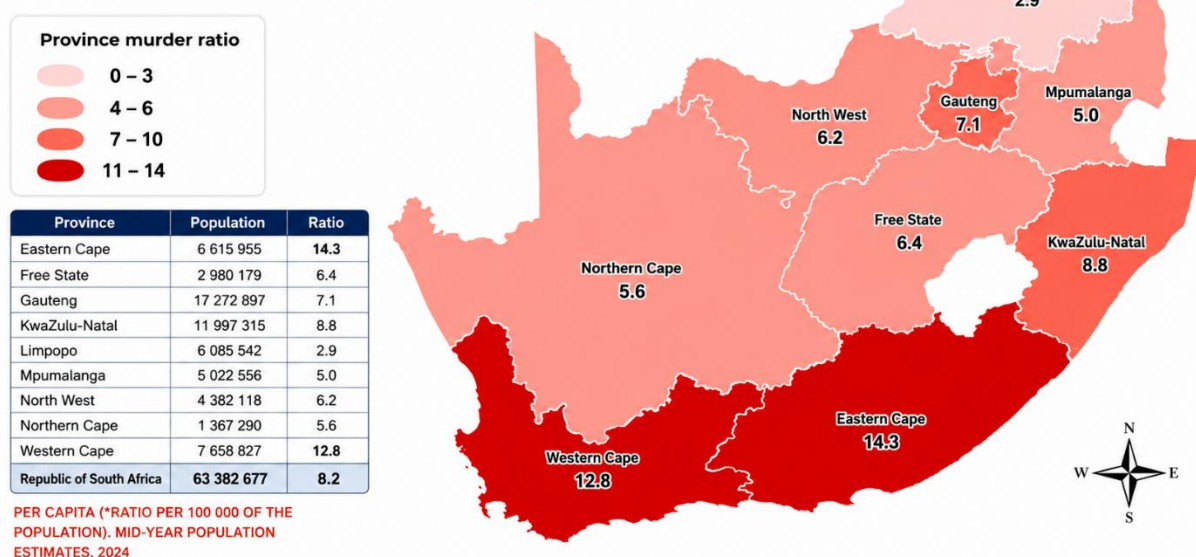


Figure 4: Murder ratio as per provincial distribution from January to March 2026. Source: Reproduced from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics presentation

Causative factors

The murder data show that interpersonal conflict remains the most common recorded causative factor. Arguments, misunderstandings, road rage and provocation accounted for 898 of the 4 814 sampled murders, or almost one in five cases. Vigilantism or mob justice was the second-largest category (299), followed by retaliation, revenge or punishment (251) and gang-related murders (242). The gang-related category is highly concentrated: 225 of the 242 recorded gang-related murders occurred in the Western Cape. Illicit mining accounted for 11 murders nationally, all of which were recorded in Gauteng.

Weapons used

Firearms were the most frequently recorded weapon in Q4 2025/26, see Figure 5. Firearms were used in 2 120 murders, accounting for approximately 44% of the murders. Knives were the second most common instrument, recorded in 744 murders, followed by sharp instruments (378), blunt instruments (196), body parts (127) and stone/brick/rock (78). A concentration in the weapons used is clearly visible, with the Western Cape recording the highest number of firearm-related murders (553), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (503) and Gauteng (488). The Western Cape also recorded the highest number of knife murders (163), while KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of murders involving sharp instruments (95). Firearms dominate the murder profile nationally, but weapon patterns differ across provinces.

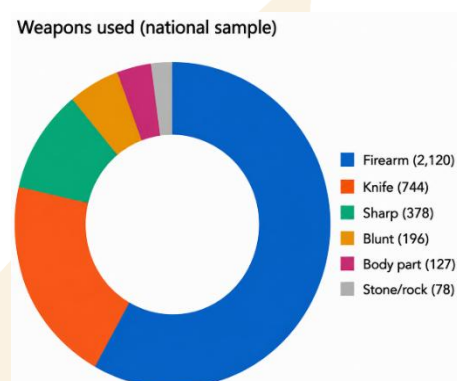


Figure 5: Murder weapons used

Places of occurrence

Murders were most frequently committed in public spaces. **Public places, including streets, open fields, recreational centres, parks, beaches and parking areas, accounted for 2 587 murders, or just over half of the cases (54%).** Residences were the second-largest category, with 1 523 murders, indicating that a substantial share of murders occurred in private or familiar settings, including the homes of victims, perpetrators, family members, friends or neighbours. Liquor outlets accounted for 160 murders nationally. Although this is much lower than the public-space and residential categories, it remains notable given the established relationship between alcohol consumption, interpersonal conflict and violent crime. The Eastern Cape recorded the most murders at a liquor outlet (36). Gauteng recorded the highest number of murders in public places (664), followed by the Western Cape (603) and KwaZulu-Natal (492), while KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of murders at residences (413).

The top 30 murder stations

Murder remains highly concentrated in a relatively small number of police precincts. Kwazakele in the Eastern Cape recorded the highest number of murders nationally in quarter 4, with 59 murders, an increase of 2 from the previous year. This is followed by Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal with 54 murders, despite a substantial year-on-year decrease of 20 murders or 27.0%. Mfuleni in the Western Cape recorded 53 murders, down with 12 murders or 18.5%.

Several high-burden stations recorded meaningful decreases. The largest absolute declines were recorded at Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal, down 26 murders, followed by Inanda (-20), Nyanga (-19), Delft (-15), Ivory Park (-13), Mfuleni (-12), Kraaifontein (-12) and Orange Farms (-12). These decreases are significant because several of these stations have historically ranked among the highest murder stations nationally. At the same time, some stations recorded notable increases. Bekkersdal (GP) and Milnerton (WC) each increased by 15 murders, while Vanderbijlpark (GP) increased by 13. Walmer (EC) and Bishop Lavis (WC) each increased by 12 murders. The overall national decline in murder does not reflect uniform improvement across high-burden precincts.

The City of Cape Town district remains especially prominent. **Eleven of the Top 30 murder stations** are located in the City of Cape Town district, and six of these appear in the national Top 10. These 11 stations recorded 448 murders during the quarter, equivalent to approximately **8.6%** of all murders nationally.

Police murder

Police murders decreased substantially year-on-year, from 22 in Q4 2024/25 to 8 in Q4 2025/26, a **decrease of 14 cases (64%)**. All eight members killed were off duty, a reminder that police members contend with risks beyond operational deployment. Gauteng accounted for the largest provincial reduction, decreasing from 11 police murders to 2.

4.2. Attempted murder

The attempted murder rate showed a marginal year-on-year decline in Q4, decreasing by 69 cases (1%), from 6985 to 6916. The reduction in murder was thus not matched by an equivalent reduction in serious non-fatal violence. This is significant because attempted murder is often closely linked to the same underlying drivers as murder, including firearm violence, gang conflict, robbery-related violence and interpersonal disputes.

Gauteng (1710) and KwaZulu-Natal (1626) recorded the highest attempted murder counts, but the per capita distribution provides another perspective. The Northern Cape records by far the highest attempted murder rate (42.3 per 100 000), followed by the Free State (19.8), KwaZulu-Natal (13.6) and Western Cape (13.4). Gauteng's high count is therefore partly a function of its large population, while the Northern Cape and Free State appear disproportionately affected relative to population size. This differs from the murder-rate pattern, where the Eastern Cape and Western Cape are the clear outliers. The attempted murder data, therefore, suggest that serious non-fatal violence has a different provincial distribution from murder. This, however, does not take inquest and culpable homicide data into account, which taken together would provide a clearer picture of murder.

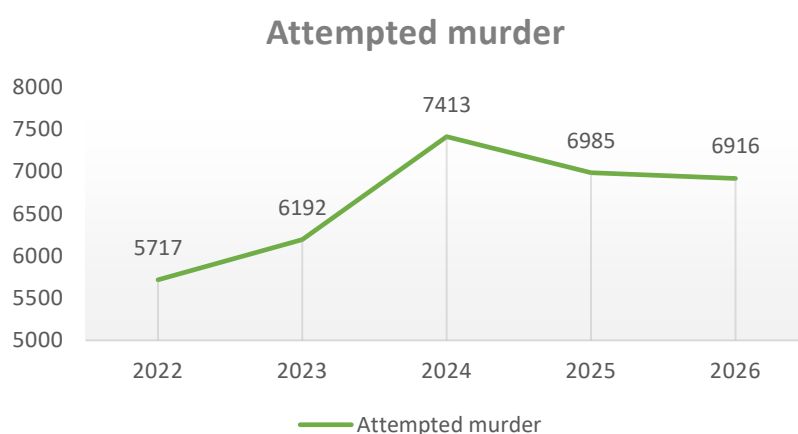
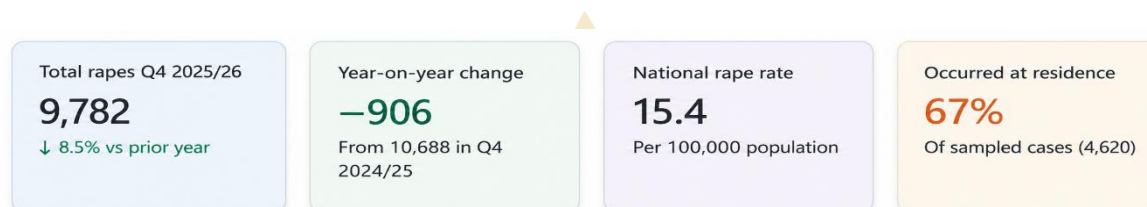


Figure 6: Attempted murders recorded between January and March, from 2022 to 2026. Source: Adapted from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

Nevertheless, the causative factors and places of occurrence for attempted murder mirror those for murder in that personal conflict is the most frequent causative factor. This is followed by robbery (636), retaliation (376), and gang-related (281). The place of occurrence is most frequently a public space (2769), followed closely by a familiar residence (2113), and liquor outlets (343).

4.3. Sexual offences

Sexual offences decreased by 6.4% during the fourth quarter compared with the same quarter in the previous year, falling from 13 452 to 12 590 recorded cases. This represents a decline of 862 cases. The decline is substantial, but this figure must be cautiously interpreted given the known under-reporting of sexual offences. According to the 2024 Victims of Crime Survey, only **48%** of sexual offences are reported to the police, meaning the recorded figures likely understate the true scale of the problem.



The decline in sexual offences was driven primarily by a declining rape trend, which decreased by 906 cases (or 8.5%) from 10 688 to 9 782. Although year-to-year fluctuations are evident, rape was largely stable, with minimal movement over the five-year period, but recorded a substantial decline in the fourth quarter (**-8.5%**), see Figure 7. Contact sexual offences also declined substantially by 19.9% (47 cases). However, the overall decline was not uniform across all subcategories. Sexual assault increased by 78 cases, or 4.2%, while attempted sexual offences increased by 13 cases, or 2.0%. Importantly, the decline could be attributed to diverse variables, including reduced reporting, and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

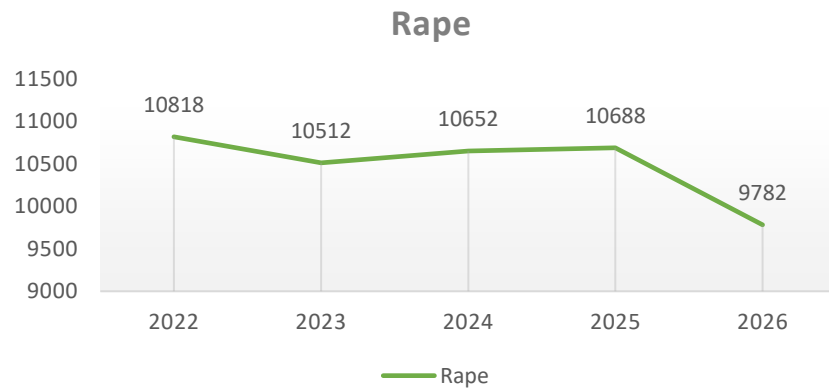


Figure 7: Rape recorded between January and March, from 2022 to 2026. Source: Adapted from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

Places of Occurrence

The place-of-occurrence data show that of the 6,927 cases in the sample, **4,620 (66.7%) occurred at the residence of the perpetrator, victim, or someone known to both**, making familiar settings the most frequent location for sexual offences. This is followed by 1,320 cases (19.1%) in public spaces. Educational institutions recorded 93 cases nationally, with KZN (25) and Gauteng (13) most affected. Abandoned buildings (80), agricultural land (80), and liquor outlets (65) are also notable.

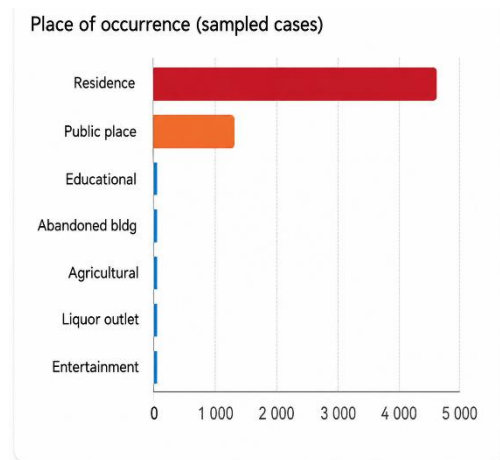


Figure 8: Place of occurrence

The 93 rape cases recorded at educational institutions account for a small share of the national total cases; these cases are, however, a serious concern. Most occurred at schools (51 cases), followed by tertiary education institutions (20), day care/crèche/nursery/pre-school facilities (13), and special needs schools (9). KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest provincial total (25 cases), followed by the Eastern Cape (16), Gauteng and Limpopo (13 each). **The victim breakdown shows that most recorded victims were learners (69 of 93 cases), while 19 were students.**

Hotspot stations

Station-level data shows that Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of rape cases in quarter 4, with 85 cases representing an **increase of 21.4% year-on-year**. Thohoyandou in Limpopo ranked second, with 74 cases, reflecting a decline of 4 cases (5.1%) compared with the same quarter of the previous year. **Delft in the Western Cape recorded 63 cases, up 16 cases (34.0%), the sharpest percentage increase among the Top 30 stations.** By contrast, several high-burden stations recorded notable decreases, including Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape and Empangeni in KwaZulu-Natal, each declining by 18 cases.

Provincial breakdown

KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng recorded the largest number of sexual offences in Q4 2025/26, with 2 589 and 2 369 cases, respectively. Together, these two provinces accounted for approximately 39% of recorded sexual offences nationally. The Eastern Cape (1 853) and Western Cape (1 663) also recorded substantial totals. As shown in Figure 9, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng recorded the highest absolute number of rapes.

Rape provincial breakdown

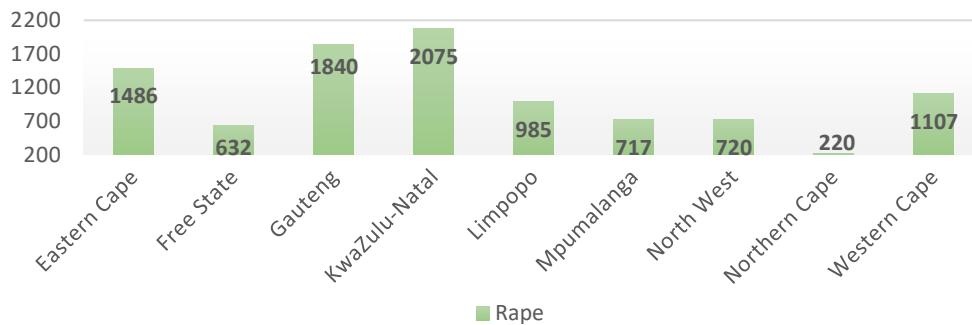


Figure 9: Rape cases reported to SAPS within the provinces

The national rape rate is 15.4 incidents per 100 000. However, the provincial pattern is unevenly distributed. The Eastern Cape and Free State are the highest per capita rape provinces when population size is considered (See Table 1).

When considering the five-year series, the rape ratio shows a broad downward movement in several provinces. The Eastern Cape remains the highest-risk province on a per capita basis, despite its ratio declining from 27.6 in Q4 2021/22 to 22.5 in Q4 2025/26. Gauteng also shows a clear downward trend, from 14.2 to 10.7 over the same period. The Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape also declined in the latest quarter.

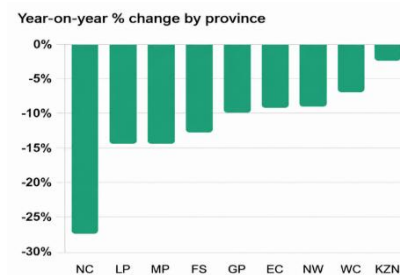


Figure 10: Percentage change year-on-year for rape rate by province

Province	Rape cases	Population	Ratio per 100 000
Eastern Cape	1 486	6 615 955	22.5
Free State	632	2 980 179	21.2
KwaZulu-Natal	2 075	11 997 315	17.3
North West	720	4 382 118	16.4
Limpopo	985	6 085 542	16.2
Northern Cape	220	1 367 290	16.1
South Africa	9 782	63 382 677	15.4
Mpumalanga	717	5 022 556	14.3
Western Cape	1 107	7 658 827	14.5
Gauteng	1 840	17 272 897	10.7

Table 1: Rape ratio per capita by province

4.4. Select domestic violence-related crimes



In Quarter 4 of 2025/26, the selected domestic violence-related categories accounted for 37 333 recorded cases nationally, of which the overwhelming majority were assault-related. Most domestic violence-related cases involved assault, with common assault making up the largest category (17 349 cases), followed by assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (8 553 cases). Together, **these two categories made up almost 70% of the selected domestic violence-related crimes**. This is a

stark reminder that domestic violence is not only reflected in the most severe offences, but also in a large volume of recurring physical violence.

Provincially, the highest numbers of selected domestic violence-related crimes were recorded in the Western Cape (8 635), Gauteng (8 352) and KwaZulu-Natal (6 391), see Table 2. These three provinces together accounted for more than 60% of the recorded cases in the selected categories. Gauteng and the Western Cape recorded particularly high common assault totals, while KwaZulu-Natal recorded the highest number of domestic violence-related murders (57) and attempted murders (147). The Western Cape also recorded the highest number of sexual assaults (60) and burglaries at residential premises (189) in the selected domestic violence-related categories.

These figures should be interpreted as recorded cases only. Given the known under-reporting of gender-based violence and domestic violence, the data likely understates the true scale of victimisation.

Crime Intensity Heatmap – All Provinces

Cell colour shows intensity within each crime column. Darker = higher count.

Province	Murder	Att. murder	Rape	Sex. assault	Assault GBH	Common assault	Robbery	Rob. agg.	Theft NEC	Arson	Mal. damage	Res. burglary
Eastern Cape	42	32	139	18	1 134	1 455	14	2	165	7	614	64
Free State	25	72	99	19	711	1 498	16	8	241	14	545	58
Gauteng	21	89	161	30	1 650	4 450	48	13	337	16	1 481	56
KwaZulu-Natal	57	147	202	21	1 620	2 855	61	22	333	12	987	74
Limpopo	21	31	94	13	600	878	24	8	85	21	465	22
Mpumalanga	8	16	47	8	458	665	11	2	77	5	313	27
North West	11	19	74	8	527	791	8	3	83	16	373	23
Northern Cape	14	75	33	4	359	315	12	3	88	8	195	22
Western Cape	34	64	167	60	1 494	4 442	38	19	598	38	1 492	189
RSA total	233	545	1 016	181	8 553	17 349	232	80	2 007	137	6 465	535

Table 2: Selected domestic violence-related crime from January to March 2026 by provincial breakdown. Adapted from SAPS

The table nevertheless shows that domestic violence remains a major driver of serious contact crime, with a pattern that combines high-volume assault, sexual violence, property-related intimidation and, in some cases, lethal violence. Indeed, in volume terms, the selected domestic violence-related cases shown in Figure 9 accounted for **10.4% of the total recorded cases** across the 17 community-reported serious crime categories in Q4 2025/26.

4.5. Robbery and some subcategories

Common robbery continues its **sustained downward trend**, declining by **5.6%** in the fourth quarter. This follows earlier reductions and supports the broader national pattern of declining robbery-related crime. However, the provincial breakdown shows that the **Eastern Cape recorded an increase (+1.7%)** as the other provinces declined.

Robbery with aggravating circumstances shows a broad year-on-year improvement, but the pattern is inconsistent once disaggregated by crime type and area. Aggravated robbery **decreased by 15.6%** nationally, from 31 749 cases in quarter 4 2024/25 to 26 796 in quarter 4 2025/26. This is the clearest decline across the contact crimes categories. The decrease was consistent across the three-month period, with the largest absolute reductions recorded in Gauteng (-1 486), the Western Cape (-979), the Eastern Cape (-809) and KwaZulu-Natal (-685). Gauteng nevertheless remains the main contributor, accounting for 37.2% of aggravated robberies nationally.



Trio crime



TRIO crimes, which include carjacking, robbery at residential premises and robbery at non-residential premises, decreased by 19.9%, from 13 347 to 10 687 cases. This is one of the strongest and most consistent reductions in the dataset (see Figure 11). TRIO crimes, therefore, accounted for approximately 39.9% of all aggravated robberies in the quarter. Within TRIO crimes, **Gauteng remains the primary driver, accounting for 41.0%** of the national total, distantly followed by KwaZulu-Natal at 19.7% and the Western Cape at 9.6%.

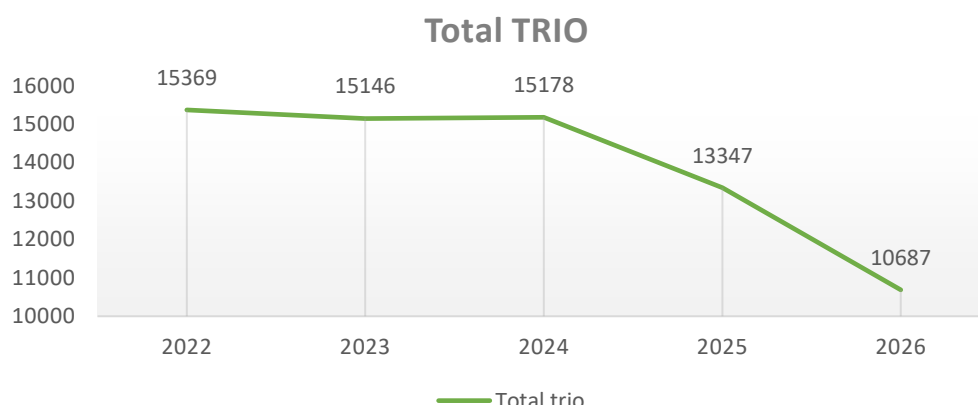


Figure 11: Trio crimes during the fourth quarter, January - March 2022 to 2026. Source: SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

The largest percentage decline among the TRIO subcategories was recorded in robbery at non-residential premises, which decreased by 22.0%, from 3 298 to 2 571 cases. Carjacking decreased by 20.4%, from 4 533 to 3 609, while robbery at residential premises decreased by 18.3%, from 5 516 to 4 507. These declines are substantial, but the station-level data show that high-burden precincts remain concerning. For example, Inanda remains prominent across several categories, while carjacking and truck-hijacking hotspots are mainly located in Gauteng.

The national total for carjacking declined by 924 cases, with **Gauteng accounting for 57.1% of carjackings** nationally, with 2 062 cases. The next-largest contributors were the Western Cape (498) and KwaZulu-Natal (446).

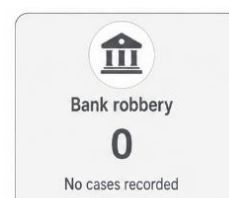
Gauteng accounted for the largest share (32.9%) of robbery at residential premises, but KwaZulu-Natal also carried a substantial burden (27.2%). The national decline was driven mainly by reductions in Gauteng (-380), Eastern Cape (-196), Western Cape (-148) and KwaZulu-Natal (-104). However, some

high-burden stations still recorded increases, including Inanda, Evaton and Dobsonville, indicating areas of concern.

Robbery at non-residential premises also declined, falling by 727 cases. Gauteng again recorded the largest provincial share (32.8%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (16.8%) and Limpopo (11.9%). The presence of **Limpopo among the top contributors is notable**, as it is less prominent in other subcategories of aggravated robbery.

Cash-in-transit crime and truck hijacking

Cash-in-transit robberies declined slightly from 35 to 31. Gauteng accounted for nearly half of recorded CIT robberies (15 of 31), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (7). The CIT-type data show that most incidents involved armoured vehicles on the road (18) or cross-pavement robberies (11), while merchant retail accounted for 2 incidents.



Truck hijacking was essentially stable, decreasing by only 2 cases, from 359 to 357. This is notable because it does not follow the strong downward pattern observed in carjacking or the other TRIO categories. **Gauteng accounted for 237 truck hijackings (66.4%)** of the national total.

4.6. Kidnapping

Although kidnapping has risen sharply over the past five years, the 4th quarter year-on-year comparison shows a slight decrease of 2%, from 4571 cases in Q4 2024/25 to 4478 cases in Q4 2025/26. Despite this decrease, kidnappings remain elevated relative to the earlier years of the comparison period (see Figure 12). The largest concentration was recorded in Gauteng (2452 cases), accounting for more than half of all recorded kidnappings nationally, with KwaZulu-Natal (737 cases) a distant second.

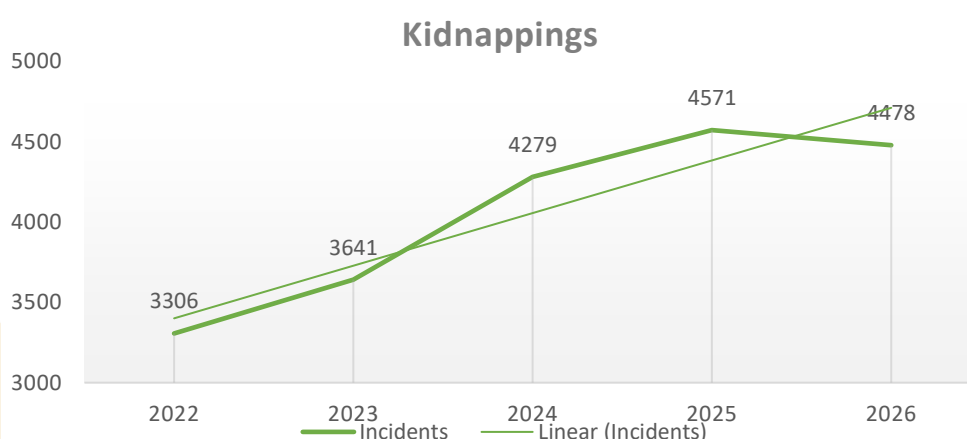


Figure 12: Kidnappings recorded between January and March, from 2022 to 2026. Source: Adapted from SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

The SAPS provides a causative-factor sample, but it should be interpreted with caution because it covers only a small subset of kidnapping cases: 268 of 4253. In the sample, ransom-related kidnapping was the dominant recorded cause, accounting for 216 cases nationally (81%). Gauteng accounted for the overwhelming majority of these ransom-related kidnappings (76%). This is followed by extortion (13%) and human trafficking (6%), which, although smaller in absolute terms, is an organised and exploitative form of kidnapping.

The extortion data reinforces the link between kidnapping, intimidation and organised criminal activity. In Q4 2025/26, SAPS recorded a sample of 469 extortion-related cases. Financial extortion was the largest category, accounting for 234 cases, followed by protection rackets (131), blackmail (99), cyber extortion (3) and other forms of extortion (2). Financial extortion was concentrated mainly in Gauteng (101 cases) and KwaZulu-Natal (48 cases), while protection rackets were concentrated most heavily in the Western Cape (57 cases) and Gauteng (26 cases).

Within protection rackets, the most frequently recorded targets were taxi-related businesses or operations (33 cases), followed by spaza/tuck shops (20), construction-related activities (13) and supermarkets/general dealers (12). The Western Cape was particularly prominent in protection-fee demands, accounting for 52 of the 83 cases nationally in which a protection fee was demanded. Only three cyber extortion cases were recorded in the SAPS sample. Given the nature of these crimes, they may be severely underreported in police crime statistics.



5. PROPERTY-RELATED CRIME

Property-related crime continued to decline in Q4 2025/26, falling from 80 043 cases in Q4 2024/25 to 73 056, **a decrease of 6 987 cases or 8.7%**. Across the five-year Q4 series, property-related crime peaked in 2022/23 at 92 150 cases and has declined steadily since then. This category is therefore one of the main contributors to the overall reduction in the 17 community-reported serious crimes.

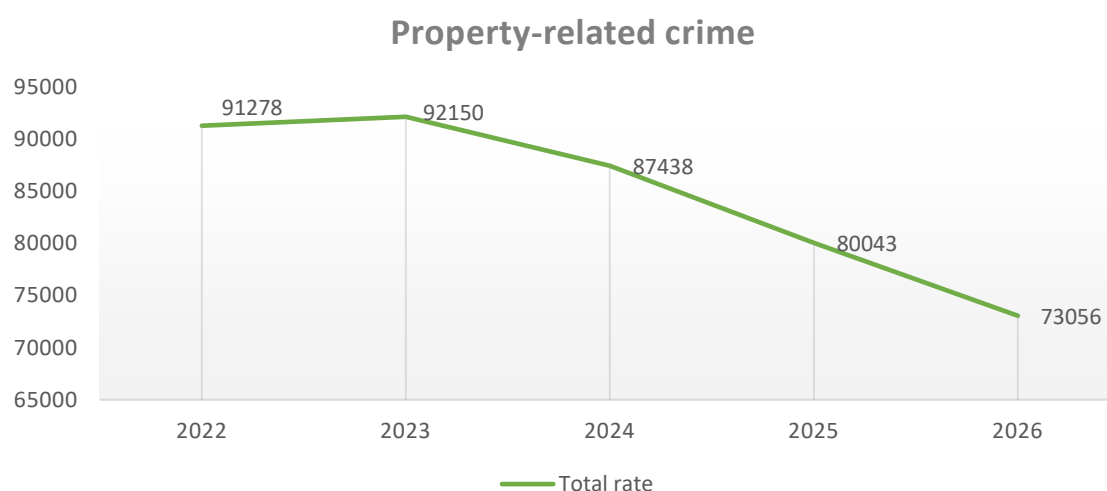


Figure 13: Property-related crimes during the fourth quarter, 2022 – 2026. Source: SAPS Quarterly Crime Statistics

The decline was broad across the main property-related categories. Burglary at residential premises decreased by 3 075 cases (-8.7%), theft out of or from motor vehicles by 1 368 cases (-7.2%), burglary at non-residential premises by 1 204 cases (-9.9%), theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles by 786 cases (-10.2%), and stock theft by 554 cases (-9.8%).

Provincially, the decline was also broad-based, with all provinces except the Northern Cape recording decreases in total property-related crime. Gauteng recorded the largest absolute reduction (-1 894), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (-1 216), the Western Cape (-1 124) and the Eastern Cape (-1 069). The **Northern Cape was the only province to record an overall increase**, although this was small in absolute terms: 12 additional cases, or 0.5%. The increase was mainly evident in burglaries at residential premises, which rose by 45 cases, a 3.5% increase. This should be interpreted with caution

because the province has relatively low overall case volumes. It nevertheless stands out against the wider national decline.

Nationally, **stock theft declined by 9.8%**, but KwaZulu-Natal recorded a small increase of 16 cases or 1.3%. The Eastern Cape still accounted for the largest share of national stock theft cases, with 1 482 cases, or 29.0% of the national total.

6. CRIMES DETECTED AS A RESULT OF POLICE ACTION

The period under review **shows a notable multi-year increase in crimes detected as a result of police action**, with a sizeable increase in the 4th quarter of 2025/26, rising from 75 769 cases in Q4 2024/25 to 85 622 cases, an increase of 9 853 cases (13%). The increase was mainly driven by drug-related crime (10.8%) and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (29.3%). **Illegal possession of firearms and ammunition detected decreased by 264 cases or 6.6%**, while sexual offences detected as a result of police action decreased by 147 cases or 4.1%.

All provinces recorded increases in crimes detected as a result of police action. The Western Cape recorded the highest number of cases (29 678), accounting for 34.7% of the national total, followed by Gauteng (21 989, or 25.7%) and KwaZulu-Natal (11 603, or 13.6%). The Western Cape was particularly active in detecting drug-related crimes, accounting for 45% of the 58 265 cases nationally.

Lower recorded illegal possession of firearms and ammunition as a police-detected crime category does not necessarily mean fewer illegal firearms are in circulation. They may also reflect fewer recoveries or less intensive enforcement and detection efforts. This is critical because several historically **high-burden stations recorded year-on-year decreases**. Mitchells Plain, Philippi, Delft, Eldorado Park, Inanda, Jeppe, and Orange Farms all recorded fewer cases than in the previous year. In ordinary victim-reported categories, a decline may suggest reduced offending. In this category, however, a decline is concerning, especially where the same stations continue to feature prominently in murder, gang-related violence, aggravated robbery or other firearm-associated crimes.

7. CONCLUSION

The Q4 2025/26 crime statistics show meaningful reductions in several high-volume and high-impact categories, including murder, aggravated robbery and property-related crime. These improvements should be welcomed. However, the overall crime situation remains uneven. Attempted murder declined only marginally, kidnapping remains elevated, commercial crime continues to rise, and serious violence remains highly concentrated in particular provinces, districts, and stations.

The central issue is therefore not whether recorded crime decreased, but why it decreased, where the improvements are concentrated, and whether these declines can be sustained. This is especially important in relation to murder, where the decline is encouraging but should be assessed against longer-term trends, attempted murder patterns, firearm-related violence, station-level concentration and complementary data on unnatural deaths, including inquest data.

The statistics also point to important measurement challenges. Complex crimes such as extortion, various forms of trafficking, cyber-enabled crime, gang-related violence, and domestic violence are not always fully captured by conventional crime categories. In these areas, better classification, fuller use of causative-factor data, and closer comparison with other data sources would strengthen our interpretation of crime trends and assessment of SAPS performance.

Overall, the Q4 figures provide grounds for cautious optimism, but not complacency. The current reductions should be treated as an opportunity to identify which interventions are working, channel efforts to high-burden areas, and improve the quality of crime data so that future oversight can more clearly **distinguish between short-term fluctuations and sustained progress**.

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